Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission
Conseil de la radiodiffusion et des télécommunications canadiennes
Canada

News Release

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POOR QUALITY OF SERVICE AND DISREGARD FOR CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS LEAD CRTC NOT TO RENEW RSTV'S LICENCE; BRAGG AUTHORIZED TO SERVE AREA

OTTAWA/HULL -- The CRTC today announced that it will not renew Riverport Satellite T.V. Limited's (RSTV) licence for its radiocommunication distribution system serving LaHave, Riverport and surrounding areas in Nova Scotia (Decision CRTC 95-296). In a separate decision also released today, the Commission approved Bragg Communications Incorporated's application to serve these areas (Decision CRTC 95-295). Today's decisions follow an April 1995 public hearing in Halifax.

"The CRTC called RSTV to appear at the Halifax public hearing to explain why we should renew its TV distribution licence," said CRTC Chairman Keith Spicer. "Given serious concerns regarding the operation of this undertaking, the Commission had previously informed RSTV of the steps it expected it to take to correct those problems."

"Based on all the evidence presented to us, including numerous complaints from subscribers and the Riverport/LaHave Committee for Improved T.V. Service's intervention at the hearing, the Commission considers that RSTV did not take the necessary arrangements to ensure that subscribers' concerns are handled in an efficient manner. If anything, the licensee's dealings with its customers have deteriorated even further," said Mr. Spicer.

The Commission gave RSTV due warning, two years ago, after the company had failed to provide service to a number of residents within its authorized area and repeatedly neglected to respond to calls and correspondence from subscribers and regulatory authorities. Since then, the Commission has received more complaints of this nature as well as complaints describing frequent service outages, unacceptable delays in response to service calls and the low number of signals of good quality actually available.

The distributor also disregarded the Commission's expectation that it return refundable deposits to all subscribers from whom such deposits had been collected. Deficiencies identified in official reports from the Department of Industry, Science and Technology and the former Department of Communications were never addressed or corrected. Finally, RSTV failed to submit to the CRTC a complete licence renewal application and other relevant information required by the regulations.

As a result, the Commission has decided not to renew RSTV's licence, which expires on August 31, 1995. Should RSTV continue to broadcast after that date, it will be doing so without a valid licence and, therefore, may be liable to a fine as provided for in the *Broadcasting Act*.

Bragg's cable licence renewal

The CRTC today renewed Bragg's cable distribution licence and authorized it to serve the former RSTV service area as well as Bridgewater, Blockhouse, Lunenburg and surroundings. The licence is valid from September 1, 1995 to August 31, 2002.

Bragg has committed to spend at least 5% of its base portion revenues on community programming during the new licence term. At the hearing, the licensee indicated that it now offers training for volunteers and can technically distribute live programming from a variety of communities served by its system. The Commission has asked Bragg to submit, within three months, revised projections for its community programming expenditures.

- 30 -

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Copies of today's decisions are available through our Internet home page: http://www.crtc.gc.ca or the public examination room at any of the following CRTC offices:

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